



**TOWN OF STONINGTON  
SELECTMAN'S OFFICE  
DANIELLE CHESEBROUGH  
FIRST SELECTMAN**

152 Elm Street • Stonington, Connecticut 06378 • (860) 535-5050

Dear Sen. Cassano, Rep. McCarthy-Vahey, and members of the Planning & Development Committee:

Thank you for raising SB 223 AAC Certain Tax Assessment Appeal Proceedings & Penalties for Failure to File Certain Property Tax Assessment Information.

Property Tax Appeals have become a big industry in the State of Connecticut. Companies, often not located in Connecticut, solicit property owners to use their services in hopes of successfully getting a reduction in their assessments. These companies work on a contingency fee basis and property owners must split any savings they receive from a successful appeal. This has led to copious amounts of frivolous lawsuits inundating the Superior Court. The sheer volume of appeals puts pressure on the court system to resolve them and municipalities, faced with limited budgets, often are forced to settle even if a reduction to the assessed value is not warranted.

These court cases are entirely paid for with public funds and all reductions result in a tax increase to all other property owners in Town. This creates an unfair distribution of the local property tax.

The Town of Stonington supports the language raised in SB 223. Not only would it prevent anyone working on a contingency fee basis from serving as an expert in a tax appeal, but it would also require taxpayers to obtain an appraisal within ninety days of filing an appeal in Superior Court. These measures would be extremely effective in limiting frivolous tax appeals with no merit. It would protect the integrity of the tax appeal process and realize savings for municipalities that have been affected by increasing litigation costs and unwarranted reductions in their town's grand lists.

Sincerely,

Danielle Chesebrough,

First Selectwoman